

# **Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in K-12 Education**

## **Minutes**

**April 16, 2003**

Members Present: James Doughty (Chair), David Silvernail (Vice Chair), Robert Cobb, Joyce McPhetres, James Rier, Jack Rosser

Others Present: Suzan Cameron, Paula Gravelle, James Sloan

- After receiving some additional information for use in future discussions, the TF turned its attention to presentations/discussions with four different experts and organizations.
- The first discussion was with Dr. Walter McIntire, an independent consultant. Dr. McIntire, along with Dale Doughty, has completed a consolidation study for Millinocket and East Millinocket. Dr. McIntire described the process they used in their study, and indicated a key strategy they used was the development of a data/information set for working with the towns and school districts. He recommended that two types of incentives be used in encouraging regionalization and/or consolidation: (1) money, and (2) human resources/consultants to help communities and school districts examine and confront regionalization and consolidation issues. Disincentives could also be built into the subsidy formula, as needed.
- The second presentation/discussion was with Alan Kochis and James Jurdak, representing the state school business managers association. They recommended the TF look at several areas/activities that could increase efficiencies:
  - a. regionalization services for:
    - 1. transportation
    - 2. special education services, including litigation
    - 3. salaries and wages
    - 4. accounting and financial services
    - 5. supplies
  - b. statewide accounting software

- c. use of ATM systems for instruction
  - d. disincentives such as reductions in state subsidy
- The third presentation/discussion was with Dale Douglas and Ronald Barker, representing the Maine School Management Association. They made several observations and recommendations for consideration by the TF:
  - a. More regionalization and collaboration of services are needed, as well as efficiencies in administrative services.
  - b. Multiple models of regionalization may be needed.
  - c. The TF may want to become familiar with the BOCES system used in the state of New York.
  - d. Regionalization may need to be phased-in over a period of time.
  - e. Food services, transportation, and custodial services may be good candidates for consolidation/regionalization of services.
  - f. The TF may want to hold public hearings, for two reasons:
    - 1. demonstration that they are really seeking public input; and
    - 2. to get better understanding of what currently is happening in school districts and communities across the state.
  - g. An effective strategy for encouraging regionalization may be a small number of well funded demonstration models.
  - h. Greater efficiencies and equities may exist in regional and/or statewide collective bargaining contracts.
  - i. The TF should go beyond just issuing another policy report; it should develop specific plans for carrying out any policy plans.
- The fourth presentation/discussion was with Mr. James Rier, reporting on his work on the State Board of Education and a member of the Washington County Education and Economic Development Alliance. He described the regionalization work of the Alliance and suggested it as one possible model of regionalization.
- After discussion, the TF concluded the following:
 

Regionalization of services and programs, including where appropriate consolidation of districts, services, and programs,

should be one key strategy for improving efficiencies and equity in Maine's K-12 education system. Furthermore, regionalization strategies need to be customized to fit the unique needs of different regions. However, the TF also recognized that regionalization is a necessary, but not sufficient strategy for increasing efficiencies and equity. Other strategies will be developed as the work of the TF continues.

- The next meeting of the TF is set for May 7 from 10:00am-4:00pm in the MSMA Conference Room.